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Salekhard!

If you take a map, you will discover that there is only one city located on the Arctic Circle. The name of this city is Salekhard. The city is the administrative centre of Yamal, a part of Siberia, and has 35,000 inhabitants. Very interesting in this city is the Anatoly Karpov Polar Chess School with 15 employees. The school is in a very nice building and has a lot of facilities.

COLUMNISTS

A youth team competition was organised in Salekhard. 16 teams participated, 14 teams from several republics, Germany and The Netherlands. Each team consisted of 3 boys and 1 girl, all born in 1986 or later.

An Arbiter's Notebook

Geurt Gijssen

In a technical meeting it was decided that the team coaches should have a very modest role during the game. Only if a player took the initiative would the coach react. This meant that a coach could only react when a player wanted to offer or accept a draw.

The organisers made a great effort to make the tournament attractive. Special guests included Anatoly Karpov and Boris Spassky. Alexander Roshal, chief-editor of the Russian magazine *64*, was press officer and also organised master classes for local journalists.

The organisation was perfect: good hotels, excellent playing hall, good equipment, great transportation and some nice excursions were even organised. The organisers hope to make the tournament traditional

Question Dear Geurt, Player A was clobbering Player B when he carelessly made a move delivering stalemate, a fact escaping both players' notice. B picked that inopportune moment to resign, and the players reported the result. About 10 minutes later a spectator, who had seen the stalemate but not the resignation, reported the true circumstances. The arbiter ruled, in my opinion correctly, that once stalemate occurred the game was over and everything afterwards, including the resignation, was irrelevant. Another player who frequently directs tournaments expressed the opposite view, based on his experience in directing scholastic tourneys where players often fail to notice checkmates, continue playing, and end up with a different result. The errors are often discovered much later, sometimes after the next round has started. What is the correct result, and would your answer be different if the error

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were discovered after the next round in a Swiss begins? **Michael Mulford (USA)**

Answer It is quite important to know what kind of game it was. Suppose it was a normal game, not a Rapid or Blitz game. In that case it is a draw. See Article 5.2:

The game is drawn when the player to move has no legal move and his king is not in check. The game is said to end in 'stalemate'. This immediately ends the game provided that the move producing the stalemate position was legal.

The problem is what the arbiter should do if the error was discovered later. Then there is at least one general rule: if it happened in a rated tournament, the correct result must be sent to FIDE.

Furthermore, it depends on when the error was discovered. If it had been discovered before the pairings of the next round in a Swiss tournament were published, the result would have been corrected. If the mistake had been discovered after the start of the next round I would not have changed the pairings. Whether I correct the result for the next round or not depends on many factors, e.g., the number of rounds left, the rankings of the two players involved at the moment the error was discovered and so on.

In Rapid and Blitz games the situation is different. Of course the next move after stalemate is an illegal move. But as you know, the game continues if an illegal move is not noticed by either player.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, You have asked for suggestions for the Rules Committee. Some time ago, Hans Ree wrote about Constant Orbaan that he was an arbiter who did nothing, but did that very well. That was in a time that the rules of chess needed only one sheet of paper and nearly all chessplayers were gentlemen. If not, the villain was corrected in a physical way, as you may remember from Dutch chess history.

How are things now? Two examples.

Some ten years ago I played in a team match when my opponent played the move I feared most, but which looked like a blunder. Thinking it was a blunder, he took back the move and to my relief played another one. Everybody has weak moments. But the arbiter was watching the game, so he ordered my opponent to play his initial move. I said I had not claimed or wanted this and asked the arbiter to check the rules to determine if he was really forced to interfere. This awakened my opponent, who suddenly saw the point of his 'blunder'. Now he demanded to play his initial move. The rules were clear enough, the arbiter had no choice. I managed to draw the game, but

I still think this was not what the maker of this rule intended.

In another team match, some years ago, a member of my team, playing black in a won position, was to his big surprise suddenly mated. He stopped the clocks, said something like 'Okay, I'm lost' and congratulated his opponent. Only then they discovered that the white king was in check. Because all this had happened in the heat of a time scramble, his opponent said that he would agree to a draw. This time the arbiter wasn't present (or didn't want to look...). After the scoresheet of the match was signed, this result stood. The rules are again clear: the arbiter should have declared the game lost for our player. On the other hand, such a ruling would negate the sportsmanship of the other player. Again, I think this should not be so.

Now you might say that the arbiter should interfere because the illegal draw influences the competition. But this happens all the time! For example, in blitz play, you should stop both clocks to claim a flag fall. In my experience, at lower levels, this is never enforced. It happens lots of times that a player just announces a flag fall, and when the other agrees, this result is given, even when a few seconds later the second flag falls. Nobody minds. Should all these games be scored a draw for the sake of fair competition?

My suggestion is that arbiters should have the right to do nothing when they feel that such is more in the spirit of the rules than doing something would be, or when players themselves come to a good decision, even when this isn't strictly according to the rules. Moreover, I think arbiters should be instructed to (not) act in this way. **Frits Fritschy (The Netherlands)**

Answer You touch on a lot of matters. It is still my opinion that the arbiter has to act as you described in these situations. I agree with you that there are some situations where it seems probably better not to act, because it can be disadvantageous for the opponent of the offending player. But, if I examine the examples given by you, I come to the conclusion that you expect the arbiter to evaluate the position on the board. And that is not the duty of the arbiter. His main duty is to make sure that the Laws of Chess are strictly observed.

Regarding to your remark about stopping clocks in case of a flag fall in Blitz games, I know at least one case in which a player did things as you suggest. He did not stop the clocks, the opponent waited until the player's flag fell and claimed a draw. And I had no choice. I had to declare the game drawn. As a matter of fact the player lost a lot of money.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I have a question about what entails "making a move". Maybe I am confused if there is a difference between FIDE and USCF rules, but I thought that "completion" of the move involved pressing one's clock. Indeed, with draw offers, my practice is to make my "move" and offer a draw, before the clock is pressed. Your answer (regarding 3-fold repetition) reads in part:

"2. Article 9.4: If the player makes a move without having claimed the draw he loses the right to claim, as in Article 9.2, on that move.

The arbiter was wrong. Article 9.2 states only that the player has to write the intended move and to stop the clocks and Article 9.4 even states that the player has lost his right to claim when he has made the move."

So, since he moved the piece but didn't press his clock, did he really make his move? Maybe there is a difference between a normal draw offer and a "draw offer" based on 3-time repetition. Forgive my ignorance of the finer points, but I have been waiting for the USCF's new Rulebook for much too long!

Allen Becker (USA)

Answer Let me again explain the FIDE rules briefly: Making a move means moving a piece from one square to another. Completing a move means making a move (see 1) and pressing the clock. The procedure of offering a draw is (1) make a move; (2) offer a draw; and (3) press the clock.

To claim a draw if the next move would produce the same position for the third time or if no piece or pawn has been captured and no pawn move was made in the last 50 moves: (1) write the intended move on the scoresheet; (2) stop the clocks; and (3) summon the arbiter

To claim a draw if the same position has appeared for the third time or if 50 moves have been completed without a capture or a pawn move: (1) stop the clocks; and (2) summon the arbiter.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, Concerning Article 12.2 (*During play the players are forbidden to make use of any notes, sources of information, advice, or to analyse on another chessboard. The scoresheet shall be used only for recording the moves, the times of the clocks, the offer of a draw, and matters relating to a claim*). There is no column or special space allocated to record the time spent on each move or by the player on any scoresheet I am familiar with. Also, why are the times recorded after each move, or on certain moves during play, not considered a source of information? I know a lot of players who use this source of information during their own games to decide on which candidate moves should they play. If any update of the Laws of Chess is going to take place in the future, can this subject be clarified? **Charles Kayle (Lebanon)**

Answer You are quite right with your remark that no special columns are provided for recording the used times. But as far I can see, there is no need for these columns, because in almost all competitions there is enough space for recording the moves and the time used. I disagree that the times mentioned in Article 12.2 refer to the total elapsed times of a game. Furthermore I am of the opinion that it has nothing to do with making notes, at least not for the actual game. I agree with you that this must be clarified so we can understand what Article 12.2 exactly means.

Question Two players contest a long game in an internal club competition and there is no independent arbiter. We are after all a friendly club. The time limit is 30 moves in 75 minutes followed by a 15-minute quickplay finish. One player is in extreme time trouble, although he has a winning position (has exposed his opponent's king with a nice rook sacrifice). There is mating material for both sides. When the time is very short for one player his opponent makes some strange moves which throw his concentration completely. No one is saying this was a deliberate ploy, but rather that both players were caught up in the tension of the moment.

The strange moves were as follows: (1) having been placed in check he makes another move and is asked to correct this by his opponent; (2) the same happens again and is corrected; and (3) he writes down a move on the scoresheet, fails to execute any move on the board but presses the clock. His opponent wastes time trying to find a move that hasn't been made, they discuss what has happened and then the flag falls. The player who was short of time has 'lost on time in a winning position'. The player who had plenty of time, made some illegal moves, has 'won on time'. How should the players conduct themselves in these situations and what should be the objective decision? A postscript: after the game the player who made the illegal moves, and had won on time, offers the game to his opponent. The reply being should he accept this offer (indeed can he?) or should he offer to replay the game? My personal, but not objective opinion is that no appeal was made during the game - indeed who could he appeal to - and so one player has lost on time. Subjectively, adapting the rules to the local situation I think the players should shake hands and replay the game. **Peter Chapman (United Kingdom)**

Answer I understand that the player who won the game made two illegal moves.

I advise you to read Article 7.4:

a. If during a game it is found that an illegal move has been made, the position immediately before the irregularity shall be reinstated. If the position immediately before the irregularity cannot be determined the game shall continue from the last identifiable position prior to the irregularity. The clocks shall be adjusted according to Article 6.14. Article 4.3 applies to the move replacing the illegal move. The game shall then continue from this reinstated position.

b. After the action taken under Article 7.4(a), for the first two illegal moves by a player the arbiter shall give two minutes extra time to his opponent in each instance; for a third illegal move by the same player, the arbiter shall declare the game lost by this player.

As you see, your friend deserved to receive $2 \times 2 = 4$ minutes because his opponent had made two illegal moves. Pressing the clock without making a move should be penalised as well. And the penalty should be again some time compensation. Obviously, it is better to have an arbiter available.

You described it as a friendly club. Although you are right that there was no protest, I would propose that the game be replayed.

Question Dear Geurt, Recently in the all India university selection tournament, which is played as per FIDE rules (one hour each for the game), both players had little time left and the game would be in an absolutely drawn position within two-three moves. Both players had a rook and one pawn. Now the problem is that the flag of player A had fallen and player B was not aware of that, but the Arbiter stepped in and mentioned the flag fall. Now my question is: can an arbiter call the flag fall in a rapid or one hour game? **Dave Paresh (National arbiter, India)**

Answer Two Articles are relevant:

B1. "A 'Rapidplay game' is one where all the moves must be made in a fixed time from 15 to 60 minutes for each player."

B6. "The flag is considered to have fallen when a player has made a valid claim to that effect. The arbiter shall refrain from signalling a flag fall."

The arbiter was wrong.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, In a recent rapid game the following happened: My opponent made a move, pushed the clock and, during my thinking, suddenly shook his head, said something like "okay" and gave his hand over the board. I shook it, noted 1-0 and looked at him a little irritated, because the position was by no way lost. Now my opponent looked at the board again and declared that he wanted to play on. I told him that he had obviously resigned, but now he told me that this was not his intention. Maybe it was a draw offer he said. The arbiter who was watching the scene decided that the game had to go on, because he didn't hear "I resign". A discussion followed, which happened while my clock was running, but it didn't change anything. As a result, I totally lost my concentration for the rest of the game. Was the decision of the arbiter correct? How does a player declare that he resigns? If my opponent should not have lost the game, what would have been the right penalty for his behaviour? **Volker Kraft (Germany)**

Answer It is true that your opponent did not declare that he resigned. There several ways to resign: (1) the opponent says: I resign; (2) by stopping both clocks and saying: I resign; (3) by laying down the King; and (4) in writing.

The arbiter was correct. That he did not stop the clocks when the discussions started was a mistake.

Question Dear Mr. Gijssen, I was playing a 5-minute blitz game. My opponent had a material advantage but was short on time. 8-16 sec left on the clock according to witnesses. I had 2 minutes. It was questionable if he would be able to mate in time. I think he would be able to remove my mating material. Then while pushing the electronic clock he knocked it off the table. When he got it off the ground it was turned off. What should happen? 16 sec would probably win the game for him. 8 sec would not be enough. Should the game be replayed or continued and if so with how much time for him. **Bernard Bannink (The Netherlands)**

Answer The regulations say that the arbiter should use his best judgement to re-set the clocks.

Question In a blitz game between two International Masters, player A arrived with a pawn to 8th and as the queen was still on the board, he said: "Queen!" and pressed the clock, leaving the pawn on 8th. Player B stopped the clocks, called the arbiter and said that it was an illegal move, so his opponent must lose the game. The arbiter agreed with the B player. What do you think? Alvaro D. Coig (Spain)

Answer In such a situation the player who needs a queen, may stop the clocks and ask the arbiter for assistance. The arbiter's decision was correct.

Have a question for Geurt Gijssen? Perhaps he will respond to it in a future column. Send it to geurtgijssen@chesscafe.com. Please include your name and country of residence.

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